My Blood is Red and Afraid of Living

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/58364884.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death, Rape/Non-Con
Categories:	F/F, M/M, Multi
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Moulin Rouge! (2001)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Alana Bloom/Margot Verger
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Jack Crawford, Mason Verger, Alana Bloom, Margot Verger
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Prostitution, Alternate Universe - Moulin Rouge! Fusion, Dubious Consent, Bottom Will Graham, First Time, Murder Husbands, Canon-Typical Violence, Slow Burn, Attempted Sexual Assault, Hurt/Comfort, Jealousy
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2024-08-22 Updated: 2024-11-02 Words: 2,808 Chapters: 2/?

My Blood is Red and Afraid of Living

by LilacFlower (SpockTheCock)

Summary

The year 1899 and a string of murders plagues the Montmarte district of Paris, including some dancers and clients of the Moulin Rouge. William Graham is the Red Ruby, male darling escort of the club due to his ability to emphasize with clients. Promised to a wealthy business man, Mason Verger, in exchange for protection of the workers. William is also drawn into the investigation of the recent murders due to his gift. Dr. Hannibal Lecter from Lithuania quickly becomes infatuated with him.

Notes

Moulin Rouge AU but story will differ quite dramatically from the movie. I also have an ongoing playlist for this work if you want to check it out!

Playlist Link

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Chapter 1:

A story about a time, a story about a place, a story about the people.

His head hurt, which, to be fair, was very old news, but today it was particularly bad. Possibly made worse by the thick layer of smoke that always hovered around the lounge area and that his current client was fond of a peculiar type of cigar.

“William, don't you think it is fascinating?” The older man draws Will’s eyes back to the table of people, all with drinks in hand and eyes on him. It takes a minute for him to recall what they were discussing, but he bows his head, lashes fluttering as he gives a sly smile to the brunette next to him.

“You know, I find many other topics of conversation much more interesting.”

He lightly grazes his fingers along the other man’s, which are currently drifting up into the inseam of his thigh. “But yes, it is all people can talk about at this point. It seems to have everyone beside themselves with either morbid curiosity or fear. They seem to forget Paris has quite the reputation for crime already.”

The table laughs and mutters in agreement. ”But dear William, Paris may not have had a crime such as this! I have heard many things; some, I am sure, are just rumors, but I can assure you of this much. Being on friendly terms with Louis Lépine, the Préfet de Police, as you all may know,” Will watches him sweep the table for acknowledgement of social standing. "Yes, well, he relayed to me briefly last we met that these crime scenes were of a nature they had never encountered before.”

“He must have trusted you very much, David, to divulge such information to you.” Will remarks, leaning heavily on the wooden table, his head resting delicately on his knuckles.

David’s eyes instantly snap to Will again, his insult framed so beautifully and with an air of flattery that he is only further enamored with him. "Well, he did confirm that they found the man strung up in the alley, his innards strewn about him, almost six meters below him.”

There is an instant reaction from the table; many of the women gasp in fake protest at his words, and one man lets out a low whistle. ”David, there are women present! No need to bring such vulgar details to the table!” Will knows as much as anyone that they are just as interested in the recent murders as their male counterparts.

“Oh Richard! One of them was a girl from the Moulin Rouge, just like me! Surely you wouldn’t let anything like that happen to me?” She teases, clinging to her chosen client’s arm, chest pressed close, and head resting on the man’s shoulder. He turns sympathetically toward her and pats her hair.

“Of course not! You just stay within the walls, and I pledge to you I will stalk the streets of Montmartre for this villain!” The girl lets out a giggle and kisses him on the cheek. William’s head pulses, and suddenly the noise becomes too much. Stabbing pains hit the back of his eyes, and he turns to the man beside him. Leaning close, he drops his voice to a whisper.

“I think I will need another drink, if you will excuse me.” Softly, Will removes his hand from his thigh and slides towards the outer edge of the bench.

“Of course! Please let me buy you and the table another round!” The table cheers, and Will smiles, allowing the man to take his hand once more and slide a considerable amount of francs into his sweaty palm. Will smiles and inclines his head to the table before turning towards the bar.

The main showroom is full; people linger among tables and lean against the railings overlooking the main dance floor. Openly flirting with each other, laughing, smoking, and drinking. The spirits are high tonight, and the wine flows easily. The girls seem in a particularly good mood; no one is missing out on the easy conversation due to the recent string of Paris murders and pleasant weather. The intense electric lights are grating on Will, but he keeps his demeanor open, his eyes up, and a slight smile on his face. Many people greet him and try to pull him aside on his way to the bar, but with practiced ease, he politely extracts himself. Will navigates the large room, sliding between tables and chairs with an air of familiarity and grace. He is acutely aware of the attention from all corners of the room; it only pushes him to pick up his pace, half dancing and half running to the far end.

“Louise, my usual, please. Another round for my table as well, though would you deliver it for me please?” A darker-skinned man covered in little more than a vest nods and smiles as he turns to prepare his drink. Will takes a moment to count the money he had hastily shoved in his jacket pocket earlier; it is enough to cover his and the table's drinks with some extra. But not much. Will briefly lets the corners of his mouth drop for a moment.

“William.” Louise sets down his drink, giving a nod before quickly returning to the other customers. If there is one thing Will appreciates, it is a man of few words.

Will sips his drink slowly, savoring the anise flavor on his tongue, and closes his eyes. He will have to find another man for tonight’s entertainment after the dance. David isn’t cutting it, despite his feeble attempts to convince everyone that his social status is enough. He wonders how much time he has left before the main show; he could use a breather from the lights and noise. To know for certain, he would have to find Jack, which is enough to make him want to gouge his own eyes out.

“Excusez-moi Monsieur.”

A spike of annoyance flashes across his features before he can rein it in. He took another sip from his drink to gather himself. He can feel the stranger’s presence and shifts slightly to the left. From the corner of his eye, he glances at the man, who wedges himself closer to the bar.

Will is taken aback by the man by even a quick look at the man’s sharp cheekbones and turns fully to take the rest of him in. It is a man William has surely never seen before; nothing about the man is forgettable. His high cheekbones are accompanied by an arched nose that

wouldn't look out of place on a classical statue, and his deep-set eyes are encompassed by ridiculously strong brow ridges. This amalgamation of features surely would look ridiculous on any other human being, yet Will cannot bring himself to look away.

There is something captivating about the man's strangeness, and it isn't until the man himself turns to address Will fully that he adds dangerous velvet-black eyes to his metal list.

"Forgive me; I didn't mean to disturb you."

Quickly, Will looks away, fingers rubbing against the wet coldness of his glass. "No, please; you did nothing to disturb me." His cheeks warm slightly at being caught so noticeably staring.

"It looked as though you were enjoying a minute to yourself, and I would hate to rob you of such a moment. It is quite overwhelming here."

Will hums in agreement again, sweeping the dance floor. It is a constant twirl of bright skirts and wandering fingers. It would be very enticing if he hadn't seen it every day for his entire life. He also spots Jack across the room, mingling among the crowd. He probably has very little time before the big number.

"I have been terribly rude indeed, blocking your way, staring, and not even introducing myself. William Graham, at your service." Will offers his hand, and the man takes it. The handshake is firm but gentle, and the mysterious man bows his head slightly. He doesn't quite smile; the corners of his mouth don't move, but it is reflected in the edges of his eyes. It only further seems to lend him an air of importance.

"William," his accent, curves his own name in a way that he has never heard. If William was anyone, *anything* else would have surely made him fawn. Probably a foreigner on top of everything. "Hannibal Lecter, it is a pleasure to meet your acquaintance." The stranger, Hannibal, apparently, even though it sounds very much like something from a novel, doesn't let go of his hand. Will can feel the calluses of a working hand, though not enough to be a general laborer. Additionally, his clothes are far too nice to indicate that he is a lowly man who just managed to scrounge up something vaguely nice enough for a single night at Le Bal du Moulin Rouge. No, this man screamed wealth and style. He makes a snap decision, forcing his body to relax, and he can feel the role slip into place again.

Will tilts his head slightly, and his eyes come up just enough to stare at the man's thin upper lip. "The pleasure is all mine; I was indeed hoping for a moment alone, but now faced with such intriguing company, I find myself less in need." It takes only a soft tug for the stranger to take a step into Will's space. Monsieur Lecter is only a few inches taller than himself, but it is enough of a difference that he must peer down at him. Will has been told he looks particularly irresistible from this angle, but to Will's surprise, the man barely reacts. No call of surprise, no hitch of breath—his face doesn't even move an inch. Surely he had not read the cues wrong? Bewildered, William makes eye contact with the man again, this time only a few inches between them.

His empathy hits a brick wall with such force that his head physically draws back from the man. His eyes are so dark and piercing that he is almost sure he can see to the back of Will's

troubled skull and can read the pounding headache and frayed nerves in just a moment's glance. But the air in the room seems to become heavier around them, and slowly the man tilts towards him, closing the gap once again.

“I am flattered to have caught your attention so thoroughly and so quickly.” His breath hitches, enough to fill his nostrils with the woody and spicy scent of his cologne.

“Yes, well, you are hard to miss.” A nervous chuckle escapes him, and he curses himself for the sudden drop in act. It happens so rarely, but something about this one is disarming.

“Graham!” The moment snaps, and quickly Will turns slightly to spot Jack Crawford untangle himself from a table of customers. All he has to do is raise an eyebrow and jerk his head towards the curtain call for him to know it is time to go. He puffs out a sigh and turns back to his handsome stranger.

“It looks like I am being summoned.” Will leans into him once more, his lips brushing the outer rim of the man’s ear. “There is a door just to the left of the bar behind me, do you see?”

“Indeed.”

“After this show, meet me out there, and I can see if you are able to keep my attention.” Then he withdraws, a daring smirk turning his lips, and gives the man one final look over his shoulder as he turns to leave.

“Au revoir, monsieur Lecter.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

If the main entertainment floor of the Moulin Rouge is overwhelming behind the curtain, there is another level of chaos. Dancers, musicians, tailors, light technicians and every other poor soul dragged into the crushing business of entertainment run from one end to another. In a constant flurry, yelling orders and questions left and right. Will just wants most of all not to be haphazardly bumped while applying his eyeliner. Dipping the brush in dark powder quickly, he applies it along his bottom lash line. His cheeks already adorn their reddish coloring and their regular dusting of light powder. The girl next to him hisses loudly and curses as she plucks stubborn eyebrow hair.
Will takes a deep breath as someone brushes against his back, screaming about a lost shoe; at least the dust and sweat-filled air brings a sense of familiarity. Chaos behind the curtain is a certainty, like dying and taxes.

“Who is this tall foreigner I keep hearing about?”

From the corner of the mirror Will can see Alana, her frilled dress the standard for the general can-can girls of this season. Red and patterned with eye-catching fabric that will sparkle in the bright stage lights and colored tights. She looks good, as she always does and is always somehow finished with costume and makeup before everyone else. Will especially.

“Don’t y’all have better things to gossip about besides my next unexpected client?”

“Not when it concerns the Red Ruby of the Moulin Rouge!”

She chuckles as he rolls his eyes so hard she is surprised he doesn’t jam himself in the eye with the liner.“Y’all need a new hobby.”

“You need to hurry up, curtain in about ten I wager.”

Will hums in agreement, putting the last finishing touches on his makeup and straightening. "Have you seen Jack?”

“No, probably up in the booth or yelling at another bewildered new girl.”

Will figures this is a fair assessment. Jack Crawford, aged about his late-40s, has run the Moulin Rouge for as long as William can remember. Some of his earliest memories are of people cowering from Jack’s harsh screams to the point of tears. He stands at around six feet and is a square-faced man, harsh, with eyes as keen and dark as a rottweiler. Ready to turn his anger on whomever he thinks deserves it at the time, child or elder, woman or man. Though if you sat any member of the nightclub down in any serious way, no one would be unwilling to lay down their life for him.
Jack breeds a strange unwavering sense of loyalty in the club. For many, despite the hard work, harassment and next to nothing pay, the place is a sanctuary. High walls, a meager bed

and two meals a day if needed. So, unlike the cold dark streets of Paris, many are looking to take advantage of some poor sod who is desperate. Not everyone lives on site but a good many of the dancers do, plus it is a decent place to fall back on if needed.
Then there are those like Will, born into the booze, smoke-filled chaos and dazzling lights. Birthed into the world by some unfortunate dancer girl, who couldn't even point them in the general direction of the father. Many look to Crawford as a surrogate, a constant staple in their lives despite how demanding he can be.

"PLACES IN FIVE!"

Alana gives Will a once over, raising one slim brow as she pointily stares at his bow. He adjusts it quickly and without another word works his way into the disorganized crowd.
He is glad to drop the subject for now, though he is sure Alana will corner him again about it later. It is always in the interest of the lower dancers to keep their eyes on who is pursuing who. The moment Will or another more popular dancer drops a client, they swoop in like vultures. Not that he blames them. It is all part of the hustle. Will just wishes they would do it without bothering him so much about it. He feels he has earned at least some peace of mind.
He is quickly at his spot, right behind the heavy red curtain. The heat from the stage lights already fills the air, thick with anticipation and the sounds of the crowd break through the barrier.
"You look exhausted." Another sigh and he wonders if it is even worth denying it. "To be quite fair you always look like that."

"Always so charming Margo." He deadpans this time glaring at her with no real malice. She is quite right anyway and there is no point in arguing with the Sparkling Diamond of the Moulin Rouge. Will tries to look anywhere but at her as they take their places center stage behind the curtain.

"So… New man I hear."

Will lets out a small pained noise and whispers to himself mostly," Damn Alana and her loud mouth." As he raises his arms, places them oh so delicately upon Margo's waist and sets a huge smile on his face. The muffled noise from behind the curtain becomes deafening as it lifts.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry I am so slow going! Honestly I am not much of a writer, mostly just someone with a ton of ideas lol if anyone is interested in being a beta reader or helping out let me know <3

End Notes

This is my first serious fic so be kind lol

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!